





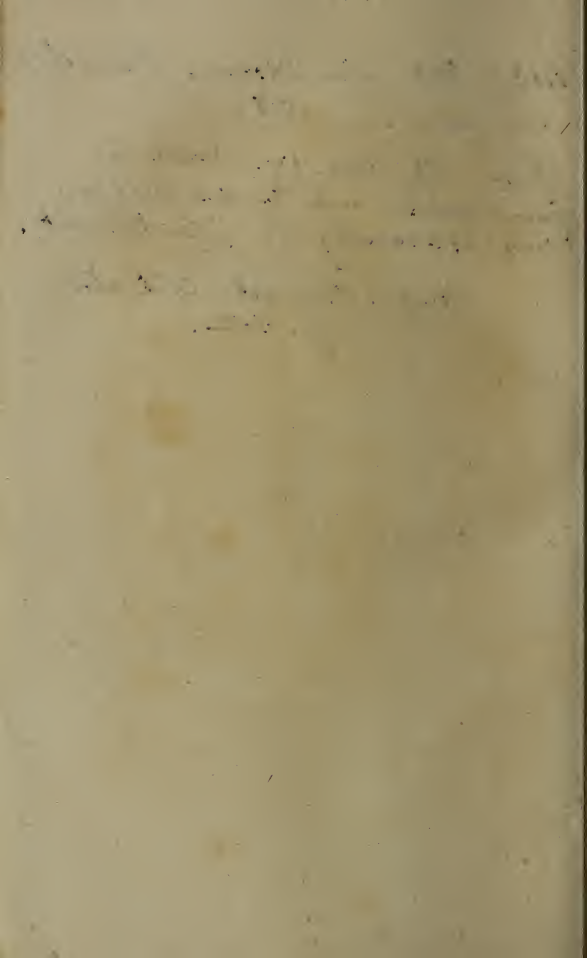




"(413). 375. The Discreet Princess.
Lumsden - 1818.

18 mo. Pp. viii. 57. With a
frontispiece and twelve full page
cuts apparently by John Bewick.

Hugo's Bewick collector
p. 142.





See pages 20, 21.

THE
DISCREET PRINCESS;

OR,

THE ADVENTURES OF

FINETTA.

AN

ENTERTAINING STORY

For the Amusement of

YOUNG MASTERS AND MISSES.



GLASGOW:

PUBLISHED BY J. LUMSDEN & SON.



1818.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

1907

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1907

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE

LADY MARY MONTAGUE,

*Daughter to the most high, most puissant,
and most noble Prince, JOHN Duke of
MONTAGUE.*

MADAM,

THE agreeable and pretty Story, which I take the liberty to present to your Ladyship, was dedicated in the original to the *Countess of MURAT*, a lady, whom the author justly compliments, on account of her uncommon delicacy of taste in this way of writing, and who was also celebrated for her fine compo-

sitions of this nature, in rhyme and poetic number, and consequently of maturity of age and discernment; assuring himself, that through her patronage, the perfections of Finetta might be rendered the more diffusive and entertaining.

BUT if the Discreet Princess believed herself happy in being made known to that fine Lady, infinitely more so must she, necessarily, judge herself to be in the acquaintance of your Ladyship.

PERSONS of polite and refined tastes, of rare and elevated qualities of soul, have, in all ages, taken singular delight in such productions of the mind, as this which I have now the honour to offer to

your perusal; since, though they are entirely fabulous, they wrap up and in-fold most excellent morality, which is the very end and ultimate design of fable: and this, Madam, is what you will find in the following Story.

It turns upon two points, and your Ladyship will thereby see how our forefathers knew to insinuate into young minds, that we fall into an infinity of disorders, when we amuse ourselves in doing nothing; or to speak more plainly, that *Idleness is the Mother of Vice*; and you will undoubtedly be pleased with their manner of persuasion, which is, that we should be always on our guard; or, in other terms, that *Distrust is the Mother of Security*...But not to

detain you, Madam, any longer, I implore your attention, and thus begin my Tale.....:Meantime,

*I am, with the greatest respect,
Your Ladyship's most devoted, and
most humble Servant,*

R. SAMBER.

THE
DISCREET PRINCESS;

OR, THE

ADVENTURES OF FINETTA.

IN the time of the first Crusades, a certain king in Europe (where his kingdom lay I know not), resolved to make war against the infidels in Palestine. Before he undertook so long a journey, he put his kingdom into such good order, and the regency into the hands of so able a minister, that he was entirely easy upon that account.

What most disquieted this prince, was the care of his family. His queen had not been long dead: she left him no son; but he saw himself father of three young princesses, all marriageable. My chronicle does not inform me what were their true names; only I know, that as in those happy times, the honest simplicity of the people gave very freely surnames

to eminent persons, according to their good or bad qualities: the eldest of these princesses they named Dronilla, signifying in our modern style, idle: the second Pratalia, implying talkative; and the third Finetta: names which had all of them a just relation to the characters of these three sisters.

Never was any person known so indolent as Dronilla: she never waked any day till one in the afternoon; she was dragged all along to church in the same condition as when she got out of her bed: her night-clothes all tumbled, her gown loose, no girdle; and very often a slipper of one sort and one of another. They used to rectify the mistake before night; but they could never prevail upon this princess to go any other way than in slippers; it was a most insupportable fatigue to put on shoes. So soon as she had dined, she sat down to her toilet, where she continued till evening; the rest of her time till midnight, she employed at play and eating her supper: after that, they were as long in pulling off her clothes as they had been in putting them on; she could never be persuaded to go to bed till it was broad day.

Pratalia led quite another sort of life. This princess was very brisk and active, and employed very little time about her person; but she had so great an itch for talk, that from the very moment she waked till the time she fell





asleep again, her mouth was never shut. She knew the history of all things; ill managements, tender compacts, the gallantries and intrigues, not only of the whole court, but of the meanest cits. She kept a register of all those wives who pinched their families at home to appear the finer abroad, and was exactly informed what such a countess's woman, and such a marquiss's steward gained. The better to be instructed in all these little affairs, she gave audience to her nurse and mantua-maker, with greater pleasure than she would to any ambassador; and when she got any thing new, she tired every body with repeating to them these fine stories, from the king her father, down to the footman: for provided she could but talk, she did not care to whom it was. This itch of talking produced yet another bad effect on this princess; for, notwithstanding her high rank, her too familiar airs emboldened the pert sparks about the court to talk of love to her.

She heard their speeches without any ceremony, purely to have the pleasure of answering them; for from morning till night, whatever it might cost her, she must either hear others tattle, or tattle herself. Neither did Pratalia, any more than Dronilla, ever employ herself in thinking, reflecting, or reading. She never troubled herself about household matters, or the amusement of her spindle



or needle. In short, these two sisters lived in perfect idleness, as well of mind as of body.

The youngest of these three princesses was of a quite different character; her thoughts and hands were continually employed: she was of a surprising viracity, and she applied it to good uses. She danced, sung, and played upon music to perfection; finished, with wonderful address and skill, all those little works of the hand, which generally amuse those of her sex. She put the king's household into exact regulation and order, and by her care and vigilance, hindered the pilferings of the lower officers: for even in those days, princes were cheated by those about them.

Her talents were not bounded there: she had a great deal of judgment, and such a wonderful presence of mind, that she immediately found the means of extricating herself out of the greatest difficulties. This young princess had, by her penetration, discovered a dangerous snare which a perfidious ambassador had laid for the king her father, in a treaty just ready to be signed by that prince. To punish the treachery of this ambassador and his master, the king altered the article of the treaty, and by wording it in the terms of his daughter's dictating, he, in his turn, deceived the deceiver himself. The princess, moreover, discovered a vile piece of roguery which a cer-

tain minister had a mind to play the king; and and by the advice she gave her father, he so managed it, that the perfidy fell upon the traitor's own head. The princess gave, on several occasions, such marks of her penetration and fine genius, that the people gave her the surname of Finetta.

The king loved her far above his other daughters, and depended so much upon her good sense, that if he had had no other child but her, he would have begun his journey with no manner of uneasiness; but he as much distrusted the conduct of his other daughters, as he relied upon that of Finetta. And so to be assured of the steps his family might take in his absence, as he was of those of his subjects, he took such measures as I am going to relate.

I make no doubt, but those who are knowing in matters of antiquity, have heard a hundred times of the wonderful power of fairies; and the king I speak of, having great intimacy with one of those able women, went to visit his said friend, whom he acquainted with the uneasiness he was in about his daughters. "It is not, said he, that the two eldest, whom I am uneasy about, have ever done the least thing contrary to their duty; but they have so little sense, are so imprudent, and live so very idly, that I fear, in my absence, they will engage in some foolish intrigue or other, merely



to amuse themselves. As for Finetta, I am sure of her virtue; however, I shall treat her as I do her sisters, to make no distinction; for which reason, sage fairy, I desire you to make three distaffs of glass for my daughters, to be made with such art, as to break in pieces, so soon as she, to whom it belongs, does any thing contrary to her honour."

As this fairy was one of the most expert, she gave that prince three enchanted distaffs, so made as to answer his design; but he was not content with this precaution. He put the princesses into a tower vastly high, and which stood in a very solitary place. The king told his daughters, "That he commanded them to take up their residence in that tower during his absence, and charged them not to admit into it any person whatsoever." He took from them all their officers and servants of both sexes; and, after having presented them with the enchanted distaffs, the qualities of which he told them, he kissed the princesses, and then locked the doors of the tower, of which he took himself the keys, and departed.

You will, perhaps, now believe, that these princesses were in danger of perishing with hunger. Not at all. Care was taken to fix a pully to one of the windows of the tower; there ran a rope through it, to which the princesses tied a basket, which they let down

daily. In this basket was put down every day provisions, which when they had drawn up, they carefully carried away the rope to their chamber.

Dronilla and Pratalia led such a life in this solitude, as filled them with despair; they fretted themselves to such a degree, as was beyond expression: but they were forced to have patience; for their distaffs were represented to them so terrible, that they were afraid the least step, though ever so little awry or equivocal, might break them.

As for Finetta, she was not in the least out of humour; her spindle, needle, and music, furnished her with sufficient amusement; and besides this, by order of the minister who then governed the state, care was taken to put into their basket, letters, which informed the princesses of whatever passed, either within or out of the kingdom. The king allowed it should be so; and the minister to make his court to the princesses, did not fail to be very exact as to this article. Finetta read all this news with great attention, and diverted herself with it; but as for her two sisters, they took no manner of notice of it; they said, "They were too much out of humour to amuse themselves with such trifles; they ought to have at least cards to divert their melancholy, during their father's absence."

Thus they passed their time in great disquiet, murmuring continually against their hard fortune: and I suppose, they did not fail saying, that “It is much better to be born happy, than to be born the son of a king.” They were frequently at the windows of the tower, to see at least what passed in the country.

One day as Finetta was busied in her chamber about some pretty work, her sisters, who were at the window, saw at the foot of the tower, a poor woman clothed in rags and tatters, who cried out to them in a sorrowful tone, and in a very moving manner, complained to them of her misery. She begged them, with her hands joined together, that they would let her come into the castle, telling them, that she was a wretched stranger, who knew how to do a thousand things, and would serve them with the utmost fidelity.

At first the princesses called to mind their father’s orders, not to let any one come into the tower; but Dronilla was so weary of waiting on herself, and Pratalia was so uneasy at having nobody to talk with but her sisters, that the earnest desire the one had to be dressed piece-meal, and the eagerness of the other to have somebody else to chat with, made them at all events, resolve to let in this poor stranger.

“Do you think, (says Pratalia to her sister) that the king’s order extends to this unfortu-

nate wretch? I believe we may take her in without any consequence." "You may do, sister, (answered Dronilla) as you please." Then Pratalia, who only waited her consent, immediately let down the basket. The poor woman got into it, and the princesses drew her up by the help of the pully.

When they viewed this woman nearer them, the horrible nastiness of her cloaths turned their stomach. They would have given her others, but she told them, "she would change them the next day; but at present she would think upon nothing but her work." She was speaking these words when Finetta came into the chamber. This princess was surprised to see this unknown creature with her sisters. They told her the reason that induced them to draw her up. Finetta who saw it was a thing done, dissembled her vexation at this imprudent action.

In the mean time, this new servant of these princesses took a hundred turns about the castle, under the pretence of doing her work; but in reality, to observe how things were disposed in it: for this pretended beggar-woman was as dangerous in this castle, as Count Ory was in the nunnery, where he entered, being disguised as a fugitive abess.

This creature so in tatters, was the son of a powerful king, a neighbour of the princesses

father. This young prince was one of the most artful and designing persons of his time, and governed entirely the king his father; which to do, indeed required not much address: for that prince was of so sweet and easy a character, that he had the surname given, of the Mild, or Gentle. And as for this prince, who always acted with artifice and cunning, he was by the people surnamed Rich-in-Craft, but in shortness Rich-Craft.

He had a younger brother, who was as full of good qualities as he was of bad: however, notwithstanding their different tempers, there was betwixt these two princes such strict union, that every body wondered at it. Besides the good qualities which the youngest prince was possessed of, the beauty of his face, and the gracefulness of his person, were so remarkable, that he was generally called Bel-a-voir. It was Prince Rich-Craft who had put the ambassador of the king his father upon that wicked turn in the treaty, which was frustrated by the advice of Finetta, and fell upon themselves. Rich-Craft, who before that had no great love for the king, (the princesses father) since then, bore him the utmost aversion; so that when he had notice of the precautions which that prince had taken in relation to his daughters, he took a wicked pleasure to deceive, if possible, the prudence of so suspicious a father. Accord-

ingly Rich-Craft got leave of the king his father, to travel, upon some invented pretence, and took such measures as gained him entrance into the tower where these princesses were confined.

In examining the castle, this prince observed, that it was very easy for the princesses to make them be heard by people going in the roads; and he concluded, it was best for him to continue in his disguise all day: because they could, if they had a mind to it, call out to passengers, and have him chastised for his rash enterprise.

He therefore remained all day in his tatters, and counterfeited a professed beggar woman; but at night, after the princesses had supped, Rich-Craft threw off his rags, and shewed himself dressed like a cavalier in rich apparel, all covered with gold and jewels. The poor princesses were so much frightened at this sight, that they began to hasten from him with the utmost precipitation. Finetta and Pratilia, who were very nimble, got to their chambers; but Dronilla, who scarce knew how to move, was by the prince presently overtaken.

He immediately threw himself at her feet, declaring who he was, and told her, "That the reputation of her beauty, and the sight of her picture, had induced him to leave a delightful court, to come and offer her his faith and



vows." Dronilla was so much at a loss, that she could not answer one word to a prince who was still kneeling: but amidst a thousand tender endearments, with as many protestations, he ardently conjured her to receive him that very moment for a husband. Her natural softness not suffering her to contend, she told Rich-Craft, in a very indolent and dronish tone, "That she believed him sincere, and accepted of his vows." She observed no greater formalities than those, which were the conclusion of this marriage: but withal, she lost her distaff, for it broke into a thousand pieces.

Meanwhile, Pratalia and Finetta were in strange uneasinesses; they had got away separately to their own apartments, and were at some distance from each other; and as these princesses were ignorant of their sister's fate, they did not sleep one wink all the night long.

Next morning the perfidious prince led Dronilla into the ground apartment, which was at the end of the garden; where this princess told him how greatly she was disturbed about her sisters, though she dared not see them, for fear they should blame her for her marriage: The prince told her, "That he would undertake they should approve of it; and after some discourse, he went out, and locked Dronilla in, without her perceiving it, and then he searched carefully every where to find out the

other princesses. It was some time before he could discover in what chambers they had secured themselves; but at last, the strong inclination which Pratalia had to be always prattling, causing this princess to talk and bewail her destiny to herself, the prince heard her, and coming up to the door, saw her through the key-hole.

Rich-Craft spoke to her through the door, saying to her the same he had told her sister, which was, "That it was only to offer her his hand and heart, which had caused him to undertake the enterprize of entering the tower: he praised, not without excessive exaggeration, her wit and beauty; and Pratalia, who was fully persuaded in herself, that she was possest of infinite merit, was foolish enough to believe all the prince had told her. She answered him with a torrent of words, which were not over and above disobliging. Certainly this princess must have had a strange fury of speech to acquit herself as she did; for she was terribly faint, not having tasted a morsel all day, by reason she had nothing fit to eat in her chamber. As she was extremely lazy, and had no manner of thought of any thing but endless talking, she had not in the least any foresight: when she wanted any thing, she had recourse to Finetta; and this amiable princess, who was as laborious and provident as her sisters

were the contrary, had always in her chamber great abundance of fine biscuits, pies, macaroons, with dried and wet sweet-meats of all sorts, and of her own making. Pratalia then, who had not the like advantage, finding herself at that time much oppressed with hunger, and the protestations which the prince made through the door, opened it at last to that seducer, when he acted again the comedian perfectly well, having well studied his part.

They then went both out of this apartment, and came into the office of the castle, where they found all sorts of refreshments; for the baskets furnished the princesses every day with more than enough. Pratalia could not help being still in pain for her sisters; but it came into her head, I know not upon what foundation, that they were doubtless, both locked up in Finetta's chamber, where they wanted for nothing. Rich-Craft used all the arguments he could to confirm her in this belief, and told her, "That they would go and find out the other princesses towards evening." She could not agree with him in that, but said, "They should go and seek after them so soon as they had done eating." In short, the prince and princess fell to very heartily, and when they had done, Rich-Craft desired to see the finest apartment in the castle: he gave his hand to the princess, who led him thither, and when

he was there, he began to exaggerate the tender passion he had for her, and the advantages she would have by marrying him. He told her, as he had done her sister Dronilla, "That she ought to accept of his faith that very moment; because, if she should see her sisters before she had taken him for her husband, they would not fail to oppose it; and being without contradiction one of the most powerful of the neighbouring princes, he would, most probably, seem to them a person fitter for their elder sister than her, who would never consent to a match she herself might desire with all imaginable ardour." Pratalia, after a deal of discourse, which signifying nothing, was as extravagant as her sister had been; she accepted the prince for her husband, and never thought of the effects of her glass distaff, till after this distaff was shattered in a thousand pieces.

Towards evening, Pratalia returned to her chamber with the prince, and the first thing this princess saw, was her glass distaff all broken to bits: She was much troubled at the sight. The prince asked her the reason of her concern. As her passion for babbling made her incapable of being silent on any score, she foolishly told Rich-Craft the mystery of the distaff; at which this prince was wickedly overjoyed, since the father of these princesses would

by this means be entirely convinced of the bad conduct of his daughters.

However, Pratalia was no longer in the humour of going to look for her sisters, as she had reason to fear they would not approve of her conduct; but the prince offered himself to do this office, and told her, "He should find means to persuade them to approve of it. After this assurance, the princess, who had not shut her eyes all night; grew very drowsy; and while she was sleeping Rich-Craft turned the key upon her, as he had done before to Dronilla.

Is it not true, that this Rich-Craft was a great villain, and these two princesses weak and imprudent persons? I am very angry with such sort of folk, and doubt not but you are so too in a high degree; but do not be uneasy, they shall be treated as they deserve; no one shall triumph, but the sage and courageous Finetta.

When this perfidious prince had locked up Pratalia, he went into all the rooms of the castle, one after another; and as he found them all open but one, which was fastened in the inside, he concluded for certain, that thither it was Finetta retired. As he had composed a string of compliments, he went to retail out at Finetta's door the same things he made use of to her sisters. But this princess, who was not a dupe like those of her elder sisters, heard him a good while, without making the least answer.

At last, finding that he knew she was in the room, she told him, "If it was true that he had so strong and sincere a passion for her, as he would persuade her, she desired he would go down into the garden, and shut the door upon him, and after that, she would talk to him as much as he pleased out of the window of that apartment which looked upon the garden."

Rich-Craft would not agree to this; and as the princess still resolutely persisted in not opening the door, this wicked prince, mad with impatience, went and got a billet, and broke it open. He found Finetta armed with a great hammer, which had been accidentally left in a wardrobe near her chamber.

Emotion raised Finetta's complexion; and though her eyes sparkled with rage, she appeared to Rich-Craft, a most enchanting beauty. He would have cast himself at her feet; but she said to him boldly, as he entered, "Prince, if you approach me, I will cleave your head with this hammer." "What! beautiful princess, (cried out Rich-Craft, in his hypocritical tone), does the love I have for you, inspire you with such cruel hatred?" He began to preach to her anew, (but at the other end of the room) of the violent ardour which the reputation of her beauty and wonderful wit had inspired him with. He added, "That the only motive he had to put on such disguise,



was only with respect to offer her his hand and heart;" and told her, "That she ought to pardon, on account of the violence of his passion, his boldness in breaking open the door." He ended, by endeavouring to persuade her, as he had her sisters, "that it was her interest to receive him for her husband as soon as possible." He told her, moreover, "He did not know whether her sisters were returned; because he was not in any pain about them, having his thought wholly fixed upon her." The adroit princess feigning herself entirely pacified, told him, "After that, they would take their measures altogether; but Rich-Craft answered, "That he would by no means resolve upon that, till she had consented to marry him: because her sisters would not fail to oppose the match, on account of their right and eldership."

Finetta, who with good reason distrusted this prince, found her suspicions redoubled by this answer. She trembled to think what might have become of her sisters, and resolved to revenge them with the same stroke which might make her avoid a misfortune, like what she had judged had befallen them. This young princess then told Rich-Craft, "That she readily consented to marry him; but she was fully persuaded, that marriages that were made at night, were always unhappy; and therefore desired he would defer the ceremony of plight-

ing to each other their mutual faith, till the next morning." She added, "He might be assured, she would not mention a syllable of all this to the princesses her sisters, and begged him only to give her a little time to say her prayers; that afterwards, she would lead him to a chamber where he should have a very good bed, and then she would return to her own room till the morrow morning."

Rich-Craft, who was not over and above courageous, seeing Finetta still armed with the great hammer, which she played with like a fan, Rich-Craft, I say, consented to what the Princess desired, and went away to give her some time to meditate. He was no sooner gone, but Finetta hastened to make a bed over the hole of a sink in one of the rooms of the castle. This room was as handsome as any of the rest; but they threw down the hole of the sink, (which was very large) all the ordures of the castle. Finetta put over the hole two weak sticks across, then very handsomely made the bed upon them, and immediately returned to her chamber. A moment after came Rich-Craft, and the princess conducted him into the room where she had made his bed, and retired.

The prince, without undressing, threw himself hastily upon the bed, and his weight having all at once broke the slender sticks, he fell down to the bottom of the sink, without being

able to stop himself, making twenty bumps on his head, and being all over sorely bruised. The fall of the prince made a great noise in the pipe as he was descending; and besides, being not far from Finetta's chamber, she soon knew her artifice had the success she had promised herself, and she felt a secret joy, which was extremely agreeable to her. It is impossible to describe the pleasure it gave her to hear him muttering in the sink, "He very well deserved that punishment, and the princess had reason to rejoice at it."

But her joy was not so great as to make her unmindful of her sisters; her first care was to seek for them. It was no hard matter to find out Pratalia. Rich-Craft, after double-locking that princess into her chamber, having left the key in the door, Finetta went hastily in; and the noise she made, awaked her sister in a start. At the sight of her she was in great confusion. Finetta related to her after what manner she had got rid of the wicked prince who was come to insult them. Pratalia, at this news, was as one thunderstruck; for in spite of her tattling, she was so very wise as to have ridiculously believed every word of what Rich-Craft had told her.—There are still more such dupes as she in the world.

That princess, dissembling the excess of her sorrow, went out of her chamber with Finetta,

to look after Dronilla. They went into all the rooms of the castle, but could not find her; at last Finetta bethought herself, that she might be in the apartment of the garden; where indeed they found her, half dead with despair and faintness; for she had not tasted any thing all that day. The princesses gave her all necessary assistance: after which, they told each other their adventures, which affected Dronilla and Pratalia with much sorrow. Then they went all three to take their repose.

In the mean time, Rich-Craft passed the night very uncomfortably; and when the day came, he was not much better. This prince was groping among dismal dungeons, the utmost horrors of which he could not see, because the least glimpse of light could not enter. However, at last, with a great deal of painful struggling, he came to the end of the drain, which ran into a river at a considerable distance from the castle. He found means to make himself heard by some men who were fishing in the river, by whom he was drawn out in such a pickle, as raised compassion in those good people.

He caused himself to be carried to his father's court to get cured; and this disgrace made him take such a strong hatred and aversion to Finetta, that he thought less on his cure than on revenge.



That princess passed her time very sadly; honour was a thousand times dearer to her than life, and the shameful weakness of her sisters had thrown her into so great despair, that she had much difficulty to get the better of it. At the same time, the ill state of health of these princesses, which was the consequences of their unworthy marriages, put, moreover, Finetta's constancy to the proof. Rich-Craft, who had long been a deceiver, failed not, since this adventure, mustering all his wits to make himself in the highest degree a tricking villain; neither the sink, nor the bruises, gave him so much vexation, as did his having been out-witted. He surmised the effects of his two marriages; and to tempt the ailing princesses, he caused to be carried under the windows of the castle, great tubs full of trees, all laden with fine fruit; and immediately they had a violent desire to eat it, and they teased Finetta to go down in the basket and gather some. The complaisance of that princess was so great, and being willing to oblige her sisters, she did as they desired her, and brought up the fruit, which they devoured with the utmost greediness.

The next day there appeared fruits of other kinds. This was a fresh temptation for the princesses, and a fresh instance of Finetta's complaisance. But immediately, Rich-Craft's officers, who were in ambush, and had failed



of their design the first time, were not wanting to complete it the second. They seized upon Finetta, and carried her off in sight of her sisters, who tore their hair for anguish and despair.

Rich-Craft's guards executed so well their orders, that they brought Finetta to a country-house, where the prince was for recovery of his health. As he was transported with fury against this princess, he said to her an hundred brutish things, which she answered always with firmness and greatness of soul, worthy a heroine as she was. At last, after having kept her some time a prisoner, he had her brought to the top of a mountain extremely high, whither he followed immediately after. Here it was that he told her, "They were going to put her to death, and after such a manner as would sufficiently revenge all the injuries she had done him." Then that base prince very barbarously shewed Finetta a barrel stuck in the inside all round with penknives, razors, and hooked nails, and told her, "That in order to give her the punishment she deserved, they were going to put her into that vessel, and roll her down from the top of the mountain into the valley." Though Finetta was no Roman, she was no more afraid of the punishment than Regulus was heretofore at the sight of a like destiny. This young

princess kept up all her firmness and presence of mind. Rich-Craft, instead of admiring her heroic character, grew more enraged against her than ever, and resolved to hasten her death; and to that end bent himself down to look into the barrel, which was to be the instrument of his vengeance, to examine if it was well provided with all its murdering weapons.

Finetta, who saw her persecutor very attentive in looking into the barrel, lost no time, but very dexterously pushed him into it, and rolled it down the mountain, without giving the prince any time to think where he was. After this, she ran away, and the prince's officers, who had seen with extreme grief, after what manner their master would have treated this amiable princess, made not the least attempt to stop her: besides, they were so much frightened at what had happened to Rich-Craft, that they thought of nothing else but stopping the barrel; but their endeavours were all in vain: he rolled down to the bottom of the mountain, where they took him out, all over wounded in a thousand places.

This accident of Rich-Craft threw the Gentle King and Prince Bel-a-voir into the utmost despair. As for the people, they were not at all concerned, Rich-Craft being by all extremely hated; and they were even astonished to

think, that the young prince, who had such noble and generous sentiments, could love this unworthy elder brother: but such was the good-nature of this prince, that he was strongly attached to all who were of the family. Rich-Craft always had the address to shew him such tender marks of his affection, that this generous prince could never have forgiven himself, had he not answered them with interest. Bel-a-voir was then touched with excessive grief at the wounds of his brother, and he tried all means to have him perfectly cured; but notwithstanding all the care taken of him by all about him, nothing could do Rich-Craft any good: on the contrary, his wounds seemed every day to grow worse, and to prognosticate he would linger on a long while in misery.

Finetta, after having disengaged herself from this terrible danger, was now got very happily to the castle, where she had left her sisters; but it was not long before she had new troubles to encounter with. The two princesses were brought to bed each of them of a son: at which Finetta was exceedingly perplexed. However, the courage of this princess did not abate: the desire she had to conceal the shame of her sisters, made her resolve to expose herself once more, though she very well knew the danger. To bring about her design, she took all the



measures prudence could suggest. She disguised herself in man's clothes, put the children of her sisters into boxes, in which she had bored little holes over against the mouths of these little infants, that they might breathe; She got on horse-back, and took along with her these boxes, and some others, and in this equipage, arrived at the Gentle King's capital city, where Rich-Craft then was.

So soon as Finetta came into the city, she was told after what manner Bel-a-voir did pay for the medicines which were given his brother, which had brought to court all the mountebanks of Europe; for at that time, there were a great many adventurers without business or capacity, who gave themselves out for wonderful proficient, having received from heaven the gift to cure all sorts of distempers. Those people, whose science consists in nothing but to cheat impudently, found always great credit among the people: they knew how to impose upon them by their extraordinary exterior appearance, and by the odd names they went by. These kind of doctors never stay in the place of their nativity; and the prerogative of coming a long way off, does, with the vulgar, very frequently supply the want of merit.

The ingenious princess, who knew all this, took a name which was entirely strange to that

kingdom: this name was Sanatio. Then she gave it out, that the Chevalier Sanatio was come to town, with wonderful secrets, to cure all sorts of wounds, the most dangerous and inveterate. Bel-a-voir sent immediately for this pretended knight. Finetta came, made the best empiric in the world, threw out five or six terms of art, with a cavalier air; nothing was wanting. This princess was surprised at the good mien, and agreeable carriage of Bel-a-voir; and after having discoursed some time with this prince about the wounds of Rich-Craft, she told him, "She would go and fetch a bottle of incomparable water, and in the mean while, leave two boxes she had brought thither; which contained some excellent ointments, very proper for the wounded prince."

Upon saying this, the pretended physician went out and came no more. They were very impatient at his staying so long. At last, as they were going to send to hasten his coming, they heard the crying of young children in Prince Rich-Craft's chamber. This surprised every body; for there was no manner of appearance of any children: some listened very attentively, and they found that these cries came from the doctor's boxes.

It was, in reality, Finetta's little nephews. This princess had given them a great deal to

eat before she came to the palace; but as they had been there now a long time, they wanted more, and explained their necessities, by singing this doleful tune. They opened the boxes, and were amazed to find in them actually two little babes very pretty. Rich-Craft made no doubt immediately, but this was a new trick of Finetta's. He conceived against her such a rage as is not to be expressed; and his pains so greatly increased, that they concluded he must unavoidably die of those hurts.

Bel-a-voir was penetrated with the most lively sorrow; but Rich-Craft, perfidious to his last moments, studied how to abuse the tenderness of his brother. "You have always loved me, prince, (said he) and you lament your loss of me: I can have no proof of your love, in relation to my life; I am dying; but if ever I have been dear to you, grant me this one thing, I beg of you, which I am going to ask of you."

Bel-a-voir, who, in the condition wherein he saw his brother, found himself capable of refusing him nothing, promised him, with the most terrible oaths, to grant him whatever he should desire. So soon as Rich-Craft heard these oaths, he said to his brother, embracing him, "I die contented, brother, since I am revenged; for that which I beg of you to do for me, is to ask Finetta in marriage, immediately on my decease; you will undoubtedly obtain



this wicked princess; and the moment she shall be in your power, plunge your poniard into her heart." Bel-a-voir trembled with horror at these words; he repented the imprudence of his oaths: but it was not now the time to unsay them, and he had no mind his repentance should be taken notice of by his brother, who expired soon after. The Gentle King was very sensibly troubled at his death. His people, far from regretting Rich-Craft, were extremely glad that his death secured the succession of the crown to Bel-a-voir, whose merit was dear to all.

Finetta, who had once more happily returned to her sisters, heard soon after of the death of Rich-Craft; and some time after that, news came to the three princesses, "That the king their father was come home." This prince came in a hurry to the tower; his first care was to ask to see the glass distaffs. Dronilla went and brought that which belonged to Finetta, and showed it to the king: then making a very low courtesy, carried it back again to the place whence she had taken it. Pratalia did so too, and Finetta, in her turn, brought her distaff: but the king, who was very suspicious, had a mind to see them all together. No one could show her's but Finetta; and the king fell into such a rage against his two eldest daughters, that he sent them that moment away to the

fairy who had given them the distaffs, desiring her, “To keep them with her as long as they lived, and punish them according to their desert.”

To begin the punishment of these princesses, the fairy led them into a gallery of her enchanted castle, where she had caused to be painted the history of a vast number of illustrious women who made themselves famous by their virtue, and laborious life. By the wonderful effect of fairy art, all those figures moved, and were in action from morning till night. There were seen every where, trophies and devices to the honour of these ladies: and it was no slight mortification for the two sisters to compare the triumph of these heroines with the despicable situation to which their unhappy imprudence had reduced them. To increase their vexation, the fairy told them gravely, “That if they had been as well employed as those women they saw in the picture, they had not fallen into the unworthy errors that ruined them; but that idleness was the mother of all vice, and the source of all their misfortunes.” The fairy added, “That, to hinder them from falling into the like misfortunes, she would give thorough employment:” And she obliged the princesses to employ themselves in the coarsest and meanest of work; and without having any regard to their complexion, she sent them to



gather pease in the garden, and pull up the weeds. Dronilla could not help falling into despair, at leading a life which was so little conformable to her inclinations, and died with grief and vexation. Pratalia, who sometime after found means to make her escape, by night, out of the Fairy's castle, broke her skull against a tree, and died in the arms of some country people.

Finetta's good nature made her very sensibly grieve for her sister's fate, and in the midst of these troubles she was informed, that Prince Bel-a-voir had asked her in marriage of the king her father, who had consented to it, without giving her any notice thereof; for in those days, the inclination of parties was the least thing they considered in marriage. Finetta trembled at this news; she had reason to fear, lest the hatred which Rich-Craft had for her, might infect the heart of a brother who was so dear to him; she had apprehensions, that this young prince only married her to make her a sacrifice to his brother. Full of these disquiets, the princess went to consult the fairy, who esteemed her as much as she despised Dronilla and Pratalia.

The fairy would reveal nothing to Finetta; she only said to her, " Princess, you are sage and prudent; you would not hitherto have taken such just measures for your conduct, had

you not always borne in mind, that distrust is the mother of security. Continue to think earnestly on the importance of this maxim, and you will come to be happy, without the assistance of any art." Finetta not being able to get any farther light out of the fairy, returned to the palace in extreme agitation.

Some days after, this princess was married, by an ambassador, in the name of Prince Bel-a-voir, and she set out to go to her spouse in a magnificent equipage. She made in the same manner, her entries into the Gentle King's two first frontier towns, and at the third she found Bel-a-voir, who was come to meet her, by order of his father. Every body was surprised to see the sadness of this prince at the approach of a marriage for which he had shewn so great a desire; the king himself was forced to interpose, and sent him, contrary to his inclination, to meet the princess.

When Bel-a-voir saw her, he was struck with her charms; he made her his compliments; but in so confused a manner, that the two courts who knew how much wit and gallantry this prince was master of, believed he was so sensibly touched, that, through the force of love he had lost his presence of mind. The whole town shouted for joy, and there was every where concerts of music and fire-works. In short, after a magnificent supper, preparations

were made for conducting them into their apartment.

Finetta, who was always thinking on the maxim the fairy had revived in her mind, had a design in her head. This princess had gained one of the women, who had the key of the closet which was designed for her; and she had privately given orders to that woman to carry into that closet some straw and a bladder, sheep's blood, and the guts of some of those animals that had been dressed for supper.

The princess, on some pretence, went into that closet and made a puppet of the straw, into which she put the guts, and the bladder full of blood: after that she dressed it up in women's night clothes. When Finetta had finished this puppet, she returned to her company; and, some time after they conducted the princess and her spouse to their apartment.

When they allowed as much time at the toilet as was necessary, the ladies of honour took away the flambeaux and retired. Finetta immediately threw the image of straw upon the bed, and went and hid herself in one of the corners of the chamber.

The prince after having sighed three or four times very loud, drew his sword and ran it through the body of the pretended Finetta: at the same instant he found the blood all trickled about, and the straw wife without motion.

“What have I done! cried Bel-a-voir, what! after so many severe conflicts! after so much weighing with myself, if I would keep my oaths at the expence of a crime! have I taken away the life of a charming princess I was born to love! her charms ravished me the moment I saw her, and yet I had not the power to free myself from an oath, which a brother possessed with fury, had exacted from me by an unworthy surprise! Ah heavens! could any one so much as dream to punish a woman for having too much virtue! Well! Rich-Craft, I have satisfied thy unjust vengeance; but now I will revenge Finetta, in her turn, by my death. Yes, beautiful princess, my sword shall.” By these words, the princess understanding that the prince, (who in his transport had let fall his sword) was feeling for it in order to thrust it through his body, was resolved he should not be guilty of such a folly, and therefore cried out, “My prince, I am not dead; the goodness of your disposition made me divine your repentance; and, by an innocent cheat, I have hindered you from committing the worst of crimes.”

Upon which, she related to Bel-a-voir the foresight she had to the figure of straw. The prince, all transported to find Finetta alive, admired the prudence she was mistress of upon all occasions; had infinite obligations to her



for preventing him from committing a crime, which he could not think on without horror, and did not comprehend, how he could be so weak as not to see the nullity of these wicked oaths which had been exacted from him by artifice.

However, if Finetta had not ever been persuaded that distrust is the mother of security, she had been killed, and her death been that of *Bel-a-voir*: and then afterwards, people would have reasoned at leisure upon the oddness of this princess's sentiments. Happy prudence and presence of mind! which preserved this princely pair from the most dreadful misfortunes, for a destiny the most sweet and delightful.

They always retained for each other a very great tenderness, and passed through a long succession of days, in so much felicity and glory, as is impossible for the most able pen or tongue to describe.

You have now heard the wonderful history of Princess Finetta, which is not only very famous, but, as tradition informs us, also of very great antiquity, which assures us, that the Troubadours, or Storiographers of Provence, invented Finetta a long while before Abelard, or the celebrated Count Thiband of Champagne, obliged the world with their romances.

It is certain, that these kinds of fables contain abundance of good morality, and for that reason ought to be told to little children in their very infancy, to inspire them betime with virtue. I know not, whether you ever heard Finetta spoken of at that age; but for my part,

I.

A hundred times, and more, to me of old,
 Instead of fables made of beasts and fowl,
 Of cocks and bulls, the bat and owl,
 The morals of this tale my nurse has told.
 Here with one little glance, we see
 A prince reduc'd to utmost misery:
 A dangerous prince, whose sable mind
 To perpetrate most horrid crimes inclin'd,
 O'erwhelmed most profoundly low
 In endless shame, irreparable woe.

II.

Here too, as in a magic glass, is shown
 How two imprudent ladies, royal born,
 Whom every princely virtue should adorn,
 Of their high character unworthy grown;
 By passing all their time in indolence,
 Lost to all honour's noble sense,
 And to strict virtue having small regard,
 Fell horribly to acts of foulest shame,
 And stain'd indelibly their royal name,
 Receiving for their crime a just reward.

III.

But if we see in this delightful tale,
The vicious punish'd, so we likewise see
Virtue triumphant, and prevail,
Loaded with glorious spoils of victory.
After a thousand incidents which none
Could e'er foresee, or in the least surmise:
Finetta, prudent, sage, discreet, and wise,
And Bel-a-voir, that generous Prince serene,
Bless'd in the love of his beloved queen,
In perfect glory mount the royal throne.

IV.

I can't but own I take delight extreme
(And all young people do the same)
Reading or hearing of these kind of tales,
So much their sweet simplicity prevails:
But more diffusive would their beauties rise,
Of more extent their moral virtues prove,
Did noble ladies in their families,
Admit them audience, and their lecture love.
The mystic meanings which their tower con-
tains,
Like vital gold lock'd up in min'ral veins,
Those in his tales by Æsop wrapp'd so well,
Certainly equal; and some say, excel.

FINIS.



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